

*Optimizing Use of a Bilingual Interactive Multimedia Nutrition Education Program, La Cocina Saludable, by Persons with Limited Resources*

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*La Cocina Saludable* (The Healthy Kitchen) was developed, evaluated, and implemented to provide effective, and culturally sensitive bilingual nutrition education for low-income, low-literate, and Hispanic audiences. To optimize reach, all lessons were adapted into a six-module bilingual interactive (IMM) program, designed to be delivered via touch-screen computer kiosks located in agencies serving people with limited resources. Evaluation results using reliable and valid questionnaires indicated positive outcomes for increasing nutrition knowledge, skills, some attitudes, and some reported healthful behaviors. Data collected on the computer, along with the evaluation results, were used to modify the modules to ensure the continual effectiveness of the education approach. Gould and Anderson have affirmed that IMM is a cost-effective way to deliver nutrition education and can help nutrition educators reach more people with positive nutrition messages. To reach the intended audience, clients have suggested that they would be interested in learning about nutrition through the IMM program while they wait for appointments. However, they would feel more confident about using a computer if a staff person was available for assistance/guidance. Thus, educators have developed strategies to enhance partnerships with agencies to meet these expressed needs. An example of best practice IMM usage is represented by the collaboration of a Colorado State Cooperative Extension Agent with English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in Jefferson County (Colorado) Literacy Center. The Extension Agent taught nutrition education classes for 12 weeks. During each class, the computer instructor, pulled two-three participants to complete a *La Cocina Saludable* module on the kiosk computer system. The IMM modules reinforced the information the participants were receiving in the traditional classroom setting with the Extension Agent. The partnership between Colorado State University Cooperative Extension and the Literacy Program worked well and, during a one-year period, over 500 people accessed modules. One Hispanic participant said, "I learned how to save money on my groceries. I was spending way too much! Now, I use coupons and make a plan using menus and a food budget." A Korean participant said, "Children made fun of the lunches I used to make for my daughter to take to school. They said the food was strange and smelled. I learned how to make fun lunches from the computer program ["Make It Fun"]. A major plus is that the ESL classes are required to have a technology component. The participants initially interacted with the program using a touch-screen monitor and graduated to using a "mouse" for interaction, which helps enhance computer-related skills. When the participants completed all six modules in *La Cocina Saludable*, they received a participant's kit that included various educational enhancers. Other best practices for implementation of IMM with low-income and Hispanic audiences have included collaborative work with local food stamp programs, public health and nursing organizations, and WIC. Funding for this work has been provided by USDA-FNS through the Colorado Department of Health and Human Services Food Stamp Program and Share Our Strength.